

## Leaders Developing Leaders

***A company leader cannot single-handedly take an organization by its neck, shake it, and send it in the right direction. Success comes when the leader turns leadership into a team sport and develops a company of leaders.***

*By Edward E. Lawler III*

The following is excerpted from *Talent: Making People Your Competitive Advantage* by Edward E. Lawler III:

One outstanding way for senior executives to show their commitment to leadership development is to actively participate in leadership development programs. Depending on their skill sets they can be active teachers or simply show their support by attending sessions.

A number of highly visible CEOs, in fact, have been excellent role models of how senior executives should behave in this respect.

When Roger Enrico was the CEO of PepsiCo, he regularly taught sessions on leadership with his direct reports. Similarly, Bob Eckert of Mattel has sponsored numerous leadership development programs at Mattel and has taught and participated in them.

When asked why he participates in Mattel management development programs, Eckert doesn't hesitate. He says it is because he learns from the programs and it gives him a change to see the company managers in action. He adds it also shows his support for talent development.

Enrico and Eckert exemplify what effective leaders of HC-centric organizations need to be. It is not the hero or imperial leader who can single-handedly take an organization by its neck, shake it, and send it in the right direction. It is a leader who can turn leadership into a team sport and who can develop a company of leaders.

In a business world that is turbulent, constantly fluctuating, and intensely competitive, what is needed is an organizational ability to adapt and constantly learn. This in turn requires having leaders at all levels who can lead change.

A very important part of the leadership activities of managers at all levels should be searching for better and newer ways to do business, new approaches to organizing, and of course for changes in the environment that should alter the business strategy.

Where possible, the search for better alternatives ought to involve experimentation, use of metrics to validate the effectiveness of new procedures, and sharing learnings with others. Admittedly this type of mind-set and behavior needs to start with leadership by the CEO, but at its very core is the principle that leaders everywhere in the organization need to ensure that learning, experimentation, and attention are focused on what is happening in the external environment.

Jeffrey Pfeffer and Robert Sutton, in *The Knowing-Doing Gap*, make a statement that captures my feeling about how managers should think about their jobs.

According to Pfeffer and Sutton, the major job of managers is architecting organizational systems that establish the conditions for others to succeed. In other words, good managers are a combination of coaches and builders that enable performance by others. They help define success as well as identify relationships and processes that will lead to it.

This applies at every level of the organization. In a shared leadership organization the expectation is that leaders at all levels are thinking about and creating systems and situations where teams, individual contributors, and entire business units are able to be successful.

**May 16, 2008**